

Notes for the Ekklēsia Meeting

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc www.dtminc.org Today's Date: January 20, 2013

Getting Messages From The Holy Spirit

by Dan Trygg

“And He gave, on the one hand, the apostles, also the prophets, also the evangelists, also the shepherds and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for service's work, to the building up of the body of Christ; ...but ‘truthing’ in love, we might grow all things into Him, who is the head, Christ, out from whom all the Body, being jointly fitted together and being knitted together, by means of the connecting bonds of the supply, according to the in-working in measure of each single part, makes the growth of the Body unto an edification of itself in love.”

Eph. 4:11,12,15,16

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of servings, and the same Lord. And there are varieties of in-workings, but the same God, the One in-working all things in all persons. But to each one is given the disclosure of the Spirit for the common good (‘carrying together’). For, on the one hand, to one is given a word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another a word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to a different person faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit, and to another the in-working of powerful acts, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit in-works all these things, distributing to each one individually according as He intends.”

I Cor. 12:4-11

One of the primary objectives for meeting together is to help one another mature. This includes developing intimacy in our relationship with God, a deeper understanding of what our new life in Christ really means, and success in establishing a character and walk that is in tune with God's heart (Eph. 4:13). The premise for what we are attempting to do at Ekklesia is what Paul talked about in Eph. 4:11-16, namely that this work of building up one another is a multi-faceted job requiring the work of a group. An individual, or even a staff of a several, could never be adequate to bring any of us to full maturity. Neither can we get there on our own. It is a job that is best, if not only, accomplished by an entire group of believers interacting together with one another in accordance with their spiritual gifts. In this view, **it is essential that we all be participants**, ...that we all “grow up” spiritually, because we all need what every person has to offer.

Part of the challenge for each of us in this kind of interactive Body is that **we need to discover what our gifts are, and how to utilize them** in ministering to each other. **This is an experiential learning process.** Paul says that we are "transformed by the renewing of the perception, towards [us] to test-out-by-trial-to-discover what is the will of God, that which is beneficial and well-pleasing and mature" (Rom. 12:2). Transformation comes as we begin to see things differently. It is an inside-out proposition. A big part of what Paul is referring to is the awareness that the Holy Spirit dwells in each of us, and that He *will* be prompting us to do things according to the gifts He gives us, ...according to the measure of faith He apportions to us (cf. vss. 3-8). **How do we get in touch with this?** How do we learn how to express this? **By taking risks and experimenting, ...by measuring our experience with the bits of revelation given to us in God's word, ...and by sharing with one another our experiences, so that we can learn from each other.** In I Cor. 2:12,13, Paul instructs us, “now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, in order that we might observe the things freely given (or, “being gifted”) to us by God, which things we tell, not in teachings of human wisdom, rather by teachings of the Spirit, by spiritual ones *discerning together* spiritual things.” In other words, **we compare notes.** We share together our experiences with other people who are spiritually in touch, and we put our heads together to understand what the communication of the Spirit may be. **That happens in two ways: First, as a Body, several of us may receive bits of revelation or insight which can be put together like puzzle pieces to discern where God may be directing us.** God leads us by means of a "trail of bread crumbs", or converging evidences, or by repeated confirmations. **Secondly, however, we discover how God may be speaking to us by hearing how He speaks to other people.** Often, God is attempting to communicate with us, but we are expecting Him to come in a different way, and we therefore do not recognize when He is speaking to us. By hearing how He speaks to others, we learn to identify when God is speaking to us.

In the past few weeks, as we have prayed and asked the Holy Spirit to guide us as a group, He has led us briefly into three very different areas of ministry. We have prayed for **physical healing**, dealing with restoring health and wholeness to one's physical body. We have been led to do what some have called “**inner healing**”, dialing up old, traumatic memories or emotional wounds in order to bring the love and grace of Jesus to undo the damage of such experiences, and to set us free from deception or patterns of compensation that have followed us

through life since that time. The Holy Spirit has even led us into some **deliverance ministry**, where He made us aware of the presence of a demonic stronghold in a person's life, and we were used by God to remove it.

One of the most amazing dynamics to witness, or to experience, is how God can lead us to a specific area that He intends for us to address. Often, in prayer ministry sessions, those who are ministering start out not knowing anything at all about the person, or they may even start praying about one thing, and find that God will lead them very specifically to deal with something that they could not have possibly "cooked up" on their own. Through the use of some of the **revelatory gifts** given by the Holy Spirit, God will lead them by a "trail of bread crumbs", ...i.e., by converging or confirmatory word pictures, images, feelings, scripture passages, etc...., to zero in on a particular issue in that person's life. Often God will lead them back to a specific memory where it seems that a pattern of deception, an emotional wound, an unhealthy coping method, or a spiritual parasite originally was introduced into the person's life. The prayer team can then help the person to deal with that issue. **There are a number of such revelatory gifts described in the New Testament.** I believe most, if not all, of us will experience some of them on occasion, and some of us may come to be especially adept at receiving information from the Holy Spirit in this way. **These gifts are very valuable in helping to diagnose and minister to the various emotional/spiritual ailments that plague us.** They serve as almost a spiritual/emotional x-ray or CAT scan that can give us important information otherwise hidden from human awareness. We ought to talk about them a bit, so we can become more aware of them when they might be "nudging us" for our attention.

The NT tells us very little about most of the spiritual gifts listed in Paul's writings. **Most of what we have to go on is the little bit of information gleaned from the name of the gift itself.** Sometimes we have a record of someone using a particular gift, but mostly we are left to figure it out on our own, and to learn from experience. It is apparent to me that *Jesus and His apostles had a strong confidence that the Holy Spirit would be able to lead us and teach us about these things.* They did not leave us an indepth manual of any kind, yet they very clearly expected that we would be able to discover and utilize our spiritual gifts. Again, to a large degree, we must rely on "spiritual ones discerning together spiritual things". We must observe what we can from the Scriptures, and compare notes on one another's experiences.

The first gifts mentioned in Paul's list in I Cor. 12:8 are "**a word of wisdom**" and "**a word of knowledge**". Allow me to make some observations:

(1.) Neither of these gifts are described as definite ongoing giftings or "offices". The context Paul is describing is that when the Body gathers, and is open for God to use them to minister to one another. In such times, the manifestation (or disclosure) of the Spirit is given for the common good. [By the way, the text says that, in such a setting, "*to each one* is given the disclosure of the Spirit..." We *all* have a part to play. None is left out.] In this kind of ministry-ready setting, one person is given a word of wisdom, one person is given a word of knowledge, ...another gets this, another gets that, ...etc. The point is that we each receive a disclosure of the Holy Spirit to help in serving one another. The Holy Spirit distributes these gifts among us as *He* intends. **Any one of us may receive either of these gifts in a particular situation.** They are *not* the property of a particular person or group.

(2.) The use of the Greek word, logos (which means "word, message, thought, matter, thing"), **emphasizes the content of what is being communicated, not the form of the communication.** In other words, "a message of wisdom" or "a thought of knowledge" could come in any of a wide variety of forms, ranging from an impression, a feeling, a specific word, a picture or image, or even a sympathetic pain in one's body. Anything that might communicate knowledge about the problem, or might guide us to a course of action to take to resolve the problem, is what Paul is describing here.

(3.) A word of wisdom would be a communication about something that needs to be done, while a word of knowledge would be a communication about something that needs to be known. The Greek word for wisdom, sophia, refers to practical understanding or skill in doing something. There will be many times when an issue will come up, and we may not know what to do about it, or our own human solution would be ineffective. If God brings a solution to mind, as crazy as it may at first appear, it will be effective. God knows what will work to move farther along into our prayer ministry session, or what to prescribe to the person being helped, or how to resolve whatever issue may be our concern. **A word of wisdom would be a specific communication from God to bring us success in dealing with the problem we are facing.** On the other hand, a word of knowledge gives us awareness of something we could not have humanly known, but does not necessarily suggest a solution. **Often a word of knowledge is used as a sign to accredit the person as being one who hears from God** (Jn. 4:16-19).